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UK should hold fast in demonstration issue

The University of Kentucky administration, specifically President Otis Singletary, should stick to its guns in refusing to intervene on behalf of several demonstrators who were arrested April 12 during a speech by the director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

A petition by 81 UK professors and a plea by the Central Kentucky Civil Liberties Union should be politely ignored by the university.

The demonstration, sponsored by the Iranian Student Association, resulted in the arrest of 12 persons, some of them Iranian students attending UK.

The professors' petition asked Dr. Singletary to drop charges which will be heard in court.

The CLU asked UK to dismiss charges against six Iranian students.

What do the professors and the CLU think peaceable demonstration means? Certainly they cannot believe it entails deliberately violating the rights of others and disregarding UK policy for such protests.

Had they protested peaceably, no one would have questioned. But when they disrupted the meeting at which CIA Director Stansfield Turner was speaking, then they forfeited

the right to claim peaceful protest.

UK is absolutely correct in letting the courts decide whether any constitutional rights of the students were violated.

In addition to the rather ridiculous request that charges be dropped, the protest in itself was rather asinine. The student group maintained that the CIA was helping train Iranian secret police who tortured Iranian protesters. There is a vagueness in that reasoning which makes it hard to swallow.

If in the remotest chance that there was some truth in it, then the protesters should have had the common courtesy and respect for UK programs to make their objections within guidelines set by UK.

If the protesters' freedom of speech were violated, then did not they in turn violate the open forum which UK hopes to present?

The Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution guarantees "the right of the people peaceably to assemble."

Adm. Turner was addressing the UK audience in that framework. The protesters were off base, and they should look to the Constitution before they take such measures.